

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of upgrading software a location remote from a corporate computer comprising:
downloading a software upgrade from the corporate computer to a portable computing
5 device;
accessing a computer at a remote location with said portable computing device; and
uploading said software upgrade to said computer at said remote location.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said remote location comprises a fueling site.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising storing a record indicative of a quantity of
upgrades performed.
4. The method of claim 1 further comprising downloading said software upgrade from said
15 computer to a peripheral device.
5. The method of claim 1 further comprising determining a hardware and software configuration
at said remote location.
- 20 6. The method of claim 5 further comprising storing a record indicative of said hardware and
software configuration.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising subsequently providing said record indicative of said hardware and software configuration to said corporate computer.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising subsequently accessing said corporate computer to
5 secure an accounting for upgrades installed.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising accounting for royalties due a third party based on said upgrades installed.

10 10. The method of claim 7 further comprising compiling a database of a plurality of records indicative of said hardware and software configurations.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein accessing a computer comprises accessing a site controller at a fueling site.

15 12. A method of generating a database of fueling site configurations, comprising:

 sending an individual equipped with a portable computing device to a plurality of remote fueling sites;

 polling with said portable computing device, hardware and software existent at each of
20 said remote fueling sites;

 storing a plurality of records, each of said records relating to different ones of said remote fueling sites, said record detailing the fueling site configuration including hardware and software; and

uploading to a corporate computer said plurality of records.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising providing a portable computing device to said individual.

5

14. The method of claim 12 wherein uploading to a corporate computer comprises uploading to said corporate computer through a web based interface.

15. The method of claim 12 wherein polling comprises polling through a site controller.

10
544
A-6
16. The method of claim 12 further comprising generating recommendations as to potential upgrades from said database.

17. A method of tracking payment obligations comprising:

15
20
providing software upgrades on a portable computing device;
directing said portable computing device to a remote location;
accessing with said portable computing device a computer at said remote location;
upgrading one or more software components of one or more computers at said remote location;
storing a record of any upgrades provided; and
uploading said record to a corporate computer for determination of payment obligations

18. The method of claim 17 wherein said payment obligations comprise royalty obligations.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein said payment obligations comprise commissioning obligations.

5 20. The method of claim 17 further comprising accounting for said payment obligations.

21. The method of claim 17 wherein directing said portable computing device to a remote location comprises directing said portable computing device to a remote fueling site.

10 22. The method of claim 17 wherein storing a record of any upgrades provided comprises storing a version number associated with each of said any upgrades.

23. The method of claim 17 wherein storing a record of any upgrades provided comprises storing a number of upgrades provided.

15 24. The method of claim 17 wherein storing a record of any upgrades provided comprises storing a version number associated with software existent prior to said upgrade.

20 25. The method of claim 17 further comprising determining if said upgrading resulted from a warranty contract.

26. The method of claim 25 further comprising accounting for said fueling site if said upgrading fell outside of any warranty contract obligation.

27. A portable computing device comprising software adapted to
communicate with a corporate computer and download therefrom a software upgrade
package;

5 communicate with a computer at a remote location and install one or more of said
software upgrade packages;

 poll said computer at said remote location to determine a hardware configuration and a
software configuration at said remote location; and

 record indicia relating to a number of software upgrade packages installed.

10 28. The portable computing device of claim 27 wherein said software is further adapted to
communicate said recorded indicia to said corporate computer for the purpose of facilitating an
accounting therefrom.

15 29. The portable computing device of claim 27 wherein said software is further adapted to
install a patch to enable functioning of said software upgrade package on said computer at said
remote location.

30. A system for upgrading software at remote fueling sites, comprising:

20 a portable computing device;

 a corporate computer including means for downloading to said portable computing
device, said downloading means transferring a software upgrade to said portable computing
device;

a remote fueling site including a site controller, said site controller including means to upload said software upgrade from said portable computing device; and

wherein said portable computing device includes means for determining a hardware and software configuration at said remote fueling site, means for recording said configuration; and
5 means to transfer said configuration to said corporate computer.

31. The system of claim 30 wherein said portable computing device further includes means for recording commission related data based on a number of software upgrade installations performed by said portable computing device.

10 32. A system for upgrading software at remote fueling sites, comprising:

a portable computing device;

a corporate computer including means for downloading to said portable computing device, said downloading means transferring a software upgrade to said portable computing
15 device; and

wherein said portable computing device includes means to transfer said software upgrade to a device at a remote fueling site.

33. The system of claim 32 wherein said portable computing device is a laptop computer.

20 34. The system of claim 32 wherein said portable computing device is a personal digital assistant.

35. The system of claim 32 wherein said portable computing device further includes means for determining upgrades needed at the remote fueling site.

5 36. The system of claim 35 wherein said determining means comprises communications means for accessing the corporate computer.

37. The system of claim 32 wherein said transferring means is adapted to communicate with a site controller at the remote fueling site.

10 38. The system of claim 32 wherein said transferring means is adapted to communicate with a fuel dispenser at the remote fueling site.